

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----007495 232250Z /65

O 232231Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE NIACT 5894
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 05896

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

FROM ATHERTON

USDEL NO. 17

FOR INR-SAUNDERS

JERUSALEM FOR STERNER ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, XF, US
SUBJECT: NEXT STEPS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS

1. WE HAVE JUST COMPLETED A GOOD TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL WHICH WE ARE REPORTING SEPARATELY.
AS WILL BE APPARENT FROM THAT REPORT, I RAN INTO CONSIDER-
ABLE RESISTANCE TO THE IDEA THAT THE EGYPTIANS SHOULD
GIVE US AT THIS STAGE THEIR IDEAS AND PROPOSALS WITH
RESPECT TO FUTURE INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WEST BANK
AND GAZA. THEY CONTINUE TO STRESS THAT THEY HAVE NO
MANDATE ON THIS FROM HUSSEIN AND THE PALESTINIANS AND
REMAIN EXTREMELY NERVOUS ABOUT EXPOSING THEMSELVES TO
CRITICISM THAT THEY HAVE ENTERED INTO ANY EXCHANGE ON
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THIS SUBJECT, HOWEVER EXPLORATORY AND INDIRECT, WITH
THE ISRAELIS. THE MOST THEY ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER
IS DISCUSSING THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA
WITH US ON CONDITION THAT WE DISCUSS THEN ONLY WITH
HUSSEIN AND THE SAUDIS, NOT REPEAT NOT WITH ISRAEL. I
PRESSED VERY HARD ON WHY WE NEED TO GET INTO A DISCUSSION
OF THIS SUBJECT WITH THE EGYPTIANS AND THE ISRAELIS BOTH

IN ORDER TO PRIME THE PUMP WITH HUSSEIN AND TO BEGIN NOW LAYING THE GROUNDWORK ON THIS ISSUE PRIOR TO THE BEGIN VISIT TO WASHINGTON. KAMEL AGREED TO SLEEP ON THIS OVERNIGHT AND WILL PROBABLY DISCUSS IT FURTHER WITH SADAT, AND HAS PROMISED US A RESPONSE FRIDAY MORNING. MY GUESS IS THAT, IF THE EGYPTIANS DO AGREE TO BEGIN DISCUSSING WEST BANK/GAZA ISSUES WITH US, IT WILL BE ONLY FOR DISCUSSION WITH HUSSEIN AND THE SAUDIS AND THEY WILL NOT BE READY TO DO EVEN THIS UNTIL MY NEXT VISIT TO CAIRO EARLY NEXT WEEK.

2. THE FACT THAT HUSSEIN IS STILL IN LONDON AND I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE HIM IN AMMAN UNTIL MARCH 3 OR 4 MEANS THAT WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MOVE AHEAD AS RAPIDLY AS I HAD HOPED ON DISCUSSION OF THIS SUBJECT SINCE EGYPTIANS ARE CLEARLY NOT GOING TO GO VERY FAR DOWN THIS ROAD, IF AT ALL, UNTIL THEY HEAR RESULTS OF MY MEETING WITH HUSSEIN. I URGED THAT THEY GET INTO DIRECT CONTACT WITH HUSSEIN, BUT KAMEL INDICATED THAT SADAT IS QUITE RESISTANT TO DOING SO. AS FOR MY SEEING SADAT, KAMEL SAID HE IS STILL INDIPOSED AND THOUGHT A MEETING WITH HIM WOULD HAVE TO WAIT FOR ONE OF MY LATER STOPS IN CAIRO.

3. ONE POSSIBLE THOUGHT I HAVE CONSIDERED IS GOING TO LONDON TO SEE HUSSEIN THERE. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, I
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SUSPECT HUSSEIN WOULD FEEL THIS WOULD PUT MORE OF A SPOTLIGHT ON HIM AND THE QUESTION OF HIS JOINING THE NEGOTIATIONS THAN HE WANTS AT THIS STAGE, PARTICULARLY SINCE ISRAELIS HAVE BEEN MAKING SUCH A POINT PUBLICLY THAT CURRENT EGYPTIAN AND U.S. EFFORTS HAVE AS A PRINCIPAL FOCUS BRINGING HUSSEIN INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS. I WOULD WELCOME AMBASSADOR PICKERING'S AND THE DEPARTMENT'S THOUGHTS IN THIS REGARD.

4. IN SUM, I SUSPECT THAT IT WILL BE SLOW GOING TO ENGAGE EGYPTIANS IN MEANINGFUL WEST BANK/GAZA DISCUSSIONS. THIS BEING THE CASE, I BELIEVE THAT EVEN IN ABSENCE OF EGYPTIAN IDEAS, I SHOULD BEGIN WHEN I RETURN TO JERUSALEM TO DISCUSS WITH THE ISRAELIS OUR IDEAS ON WHAT MODIFICATIONS IN THE BEGIN SELF-RULE PLAN WILL BE REQUIRED TO PUT IT IN THE NEGOTIATING BALLPARK FROM THE ARAB POINT OF VIEW. I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO DO SO WHEN I RETURN TO JERUSALEM THIS TIME.

5. FOR TEL AVIV. WE TENTATIVELY HAVE A MEETING WITH KAMEL EARLY FRIDAY AFTERNOON, AFTER WHICH I NOW BELIEVE WE WILL HAVE ACCOMPLISHED ALL WE CAN IN CAIRO ON THIS

STOP. WE ARE THEREFORE TENTATIVELY PLANNING TO RETURN TO JERUSALEM FRIDAY EVENING AFTER ALL, ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE TOO LATE FOR MY 3:30PM MEETING WITH DAYAN WHICH I ASSUME CAN BE RESCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY. I WILL CONFIRM THIS AFTER WE HAVE A BETTER READING FROM THE EGYPTIANS FRIDAY.

6. SINCE FOREGOING WAS DICTATED, FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL HAS INFORMED AMBASSADOR EILTS THAT SADAT WANTS US TO

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EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

CALL ON HIM IN ISMAILIYA TOMORROW MORNING. WE SEE THIS AS A VERY GOOD SIGN AND WILL USE THIS MEETING TO REINFORCE POINTS MADE TO KAMEL TODAY AND SEEK TO CLARIFY SOME OF THE UNCERTAINTIES STILL EXISTING ABOUT PRESENT EGYPTIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD CURRENT PHASE OF NEGOTIATING PROCESS. ANY FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS SHOULD REACH US BY 10:00 LOCAL TIME (0300 WASHINGTON TIME) FRIDAY MORNING. EILTS

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